

PROGRAM PLANNING

Worship Sharing Coordinator

Worship sharing has been customarily scheduled for 45 minute time slot, Thursday through Saturday. In 2026 this slot has been moved to 4:45-5:30 p.m. Not everyone in attendance will go to worship sharing but it is a significant event for many. In the past there have been four or five groups (with five to six participants) have met for worship sharing. In more recent years there have only been enough attendees for two to three groups.

Due to a decrease in interest in and attendance at Worship-Sharing, starting in 2026, if the Program Planning Group is so led, they might experiment with structuring this time slot differently. For example:

- Instead of each group having the same queries, groups might have different queries and/or the focus of the queries be wider than the theme of the sessions, such as individual or meeting spiritual development.
- In addition to a couple of worship sharing groups, the time slot could concurrently be used for special meetings for worship—healing, grief, etc.
- It could be reconceived as a time for “Worship/Spiritual Development Groups.” Noting that the time slot should not become a place for interest/affinity groups or for informational presentations by visiting reps from organization or ILYM committees/monthly meetings—these would be for workshop time.
- Whatever new that might be happening in this time concurrently with worship sharing groups, it should have a worship-focus or centered around the discussing and sharing of some type of spiritual development.

If doing something alternative, please be in contact with the AdminCoor before the registration packet information due date (usually mid-March) so things can appropriately be listed in the promotional materials.

Hybrid/Virtual Offerings

In 2025, there was a trial offering of hybrid worship sharing. Response to it was mixed in terms of being a positive or negative experience. The initial session had an OK number of people attending virtually and in-person. The next day there was a drop off in attendance, no one (besides the facilitator and assistant) in-person and only one person virtually. When a hybrid format is participatory (open discussion, participants equally share in conversation) such as in worship sharing, it is challenging to establish centeredness among both the local and remote participants.

While it is possible to offer a daily hybrid session again, the Program Planning Group might want to consider offering a daily virtual-only session, which eliminates the challenges of hybrid sessions.

If offering a hybrid session, the facilitator will need to be willing to facilitate a hybrid sessions, and the facilitator will need someone else to assist them with the virtual component by serving as the Zoom host for the sessions and assisting the session facilitator by operating the virtual component of the session. The Program Planning Group A/V Coordinator is tasked with finding one, but needs to know they need to find one.

If offering a virtual-only sessions, the Zoom assistant is not needed. The facilitator would host them meeting from their own laptop somewhere on the ILYM campus, or if the facilitator is a virtual attender from their home.

To Do for a traditional worship sharing format

- Draw up a list of queries (along with the Program Planning Group), either one set of queries to be drawn from each day or a set of queries for each day. These should incorporate the theme of Annual Sessions and can be used flexibly as focus for the worship sharing. Be careful not to have too many queries or too complicated and wordy queries.
- Draw up a list of facilitators for each group. The facilitators are invited in advance and as early as possible so as to allow for those who decline. When necessary, a facilitator may be invited “on the spot.” It is recommended that there be a range of experience represented with novices being introduced.
- Send the queries to the Administrative Coordinator by the beginning of March for inclusion in the registration form.
- Inform the Administrative Coordinator (by the last week of May) of the number of groups planned and the name of the facilitator of each group. The Administrative Coordinator assigns the locations and prepares the sign up sheets for worship sharing groups.
- If desired to have queries printed on handouts print to distribute to attenders, inform the Administrative Coordinator by the last week of May to print up copies.
- If items are to be printed, send the queries to the facilitators before Annual Sessions along with the worship sharing definition and ground rules (current text follows below). It is advisable to have a brief orientation for facilitators when they arrive at Annual Sessions. Emphasis should be placed on the confidentiality of sharing. See guidelines below.
- Sends thank you notes to all the worship sharing facilitators after Annual Sessions.

WORSHIP SHARING

Worship sharing can be defined as practices in active listening and sharing at a deep spiritual level. There is sharing of each person's experiences around a given topic or group of pertinent questions with the goal of deepening our search for ultimate realities in life, and relating these to the topics and concerns being discussed. It is a sharing of experiences coming out of worship, not a cross-discussion or question-and-answer session. Each person speaks only once until everyone has had a chance to speak. No one monopolizes the group.

SUGGESTED WORSHIP SHARING GUIDELINES

1. The leader provides a seed for meditation usually in the form of queries.
2. After a period of centering down, participants respond out of the silence.
3. Allow some time, a minute or two, after someone has spoken before you speak.
4. No one speaks a second time before everyone has spoken once.
5. No one speaks four times before everyone has spoken twice.
6. The leader lets the group know when the time is almost up.
7. The leader ends worship sharing with at least a brief period of silence.